

# News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **“A Place for Healing” Mt. Tamalpais Overlook Dedicated to Veterans**

California State Parks has dedicated a special place to the Veterans of California and the nation as “A Place for Healing.”

Located near the peak of Mt. Tamalpais, in Mt. Tamalpais State Park in Marin County, the park bench at the end of a new and accessible trail, has a plaque installed that shall serve as symbol of the invitation from State Parks to all veterans to seek out parks as places for reflection and healing.



In recent years, various studies have indicated that veterans suffering from nightmares, anxiety, anger, depression and other ailments associated with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), have been helped by an immersion into the calming effects of nature.

“We ask a tremendous amount from our veterans and we must care for them in their time of need,” said Ruth Coleman, director of California State Parks. “We at State Parks have some of the most beautiful natural places in the world and we wish to invite all veterans to take advantage of the healing that can come from these special places.”

Recent news reporters have indicated that the Veterans Affairs Health Care Campus in Palo Alto treats more than 58,000 veterans each year. Most of these veterans have served numerous tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, suffering wounds and injuries that have left many with post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD).

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The debilitating symptoms of PTSD are the unseen wounds. Treatments for PTSD include everything from drugs to intense therapy. Not all such treatments work for all persons. The difficulty in finding effective treatments has led Doctors, therapists, veterans themselves, and their families, to reach out for other methods that help. And that is where recent discoveries in healing have found something simple and within the reach of all veterans.

### **Nature as a remedy that works for healing**

At the veterans Affairs Health Care Campus in Palo Alto, it has been discovered that what many veterans need is a place to escape besides their hospital rooms. The hospital produced a healing garden on the grounds of the campus. The Workers at the Health Care Campus, families of veterans and veterans themselves, have discovered that after structured therapy and medical appointments, veterans respond to the calming effect of the garden. A story by KTVU Television in Oakland said, "It's a quiet oasis of trees, ferns, and roses, where veterans cooped inside can get outdoors and release the pressure they may be feeling."

Other reports are also citing the healing effect of the quiet surroundings of nature. USA Today reported on a group of veterans who are finding healing in such outdoor activities as hunting and fishing, activities in places that take the mind away from the physical and mental wounds, and the hospitals and sterile rehabilitation centers, and into the therapeutic embrace of nature. From this USA story came a quote that seems to put the calming effects of nature into perspective. One of the program members said, "You can see their whole attitude change."

In yet another program, the NatureBridge Olympic Park Institute hosted military veterans and their families in the Operation Purple Healing Adventure Program. As reported in the Sequim Gazette newspaper in Washington State, veterans and their families were given a chance to reconnect as they spent time together relaxing, fishing, boating and enjoying adventures led by experienced outdoor educators. All of this occurred within Olympic National Park. In the article, Kent Chappie, Olympic Park Institute Field Science Educator said, "One of the most important things I feel that we do here is to provide a positive transformative experience for these young people through immersion in nature."

If the healing effects of nature help our veterans and their families recover, then California State Parks must do its part. Added Coleman, "We must say welcome home, please sit a spell or find recreation in our parks and let the calming effects of nature give you strength."

Reports and information can be found at the below listed web site locations:

<http://tearsofawarrior.com/healing-waters>

[www.ktvu.com/print/23256496/detail.html](http://www.ktvu.com/print/23256496/detail.html)

[www.usatoday.com/news/health/2009-11-04-nature-veterans-injured\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2009-11-04-nature-veterans-injured_N.htm)

[www.straylighteffect.com/2010/06/veterans-with-ptsd-fly-fish-with-rivers-for-recovery/](http://www.straylighteffect.com/2010/06/veterans-with-ptsd-fly-fish-with-rivers-for-recovery/)

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/05/100502080414.htm>

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**Plaque to be installed at Mt. Tamalpais State Park**

## ***Dear Veteran – Welcome Home!***

Your Journey for America has been both tough and rewarding. You have sacrificed and given much and your service is greatly appreciated.

Many veterans come home affected by the demands of their service, with wounds of the mind, body and spirit.

This special place overlooking the beauty of California has been set aside for veterans seeking a place of quiet, a place of natural beauty that inspires healing.

We invite you to sit and look out over the forests, the meadows, the Pacific and the fog, and take in the stillness that will embrace you and give you strength for tomorrow.



**California State Parks  
California Department of Veteran's Affairs  
Veteran's Day, November 11, 2010**



California State Parks has a Distinguished Veteran Pass, which has no fee and is lifetime. It is presented to all honorably discharged war veterans who are residents of California with a 50% or more service-connected disability, or were held as prisoners of war, or recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor. The State parks web site – [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov) – has information and the application form for all who are eligible.

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